

From: Bill Kristan
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 2:51pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I oppose the proposed settlement in the Microsoft antitrust case. Microsoft has already been found guilty of antitrust violations, and any remedy should prevent them from such violations in the future. The current settlement does not prevent them from continuing to illegally maintain their monopoly in any way. Any remedy for their illegal practices must at a minimum include the following:

1. Microsoft Windows should be provided as an extra-cost option when I purchase a computer. It is currently nearly impossible to buy an IBM-PC compatible computer without also buying MS-Windows, thereby forcing me to pay Microsoft for a product I do not want. Microsoft's willingness to punish computer manufacturers for offering computers with alternative operating systems, or computers with more than one operating system preloaded, is apparently responsible for this fact, and the practice should be discontinued.

2. Microsoft's file formats should be completely documented so that other software companies can write programs that are able to read and write native Microsoft files. Although I do not regularly use the Microsoft Office package, for example, the fact that it is not possible for me to read and write the binary MS-Office files that others send me has forced me to keep a copy of the MS-Office installed on one of my computers just to allow me to read the files. Furthermore, since MS-Office file formats are frequently not backwards-compatible I have in the past had to upgrade my copy of MS-Office even though I would prefer not to own it in the first place. The "filters" that other companies write for MS-Office files vary in quality, but none are able to preserve all of the formatting and content of the files. This is not a technical necessity, but is rather a strategy by Microsoft to induce customers to buy MS-Office instead of competing packages, and force them to upgrade when they would otherwise be content with their current version. Making the file format API public would solve this problem.

I trust that in the Government's desire for a rapid resolution to this case that it will not abandon an attempt at an effective remedy. Microsoft has already been found guilty of illegally maintaining their monopoly position, and I hope that the Government chooses to honor its responsibility to the American consumer to prevent Microsoft from continuing in their illegal behavior.

Sincerely,

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